

Newsletter – June 2021

Welcome to the tenth Back Dane Trust Newsletter.¹

Progress! Since our last newsletter in March, we have been able to host a small number of groups and carry out a ‘mini’ Improvement Weekend at Back Dane, all keeping within the Government’s current Covid guidelines.

The bookings calendar is fuller than it has ever been over the Summer, with almost all bookings being Kids Weekends, Partnership Holidays, or other charitable groups and organisations aligned with our objectives.



The Trust’s 2020 Annual Report was produced in March and is available to download from our website (www.backdane.co.uk). An online AGM was also held on 20th March via Zoom, with all Trustees and 26 members joining. We thanked and said goodbye to Jean Davis, Mick Jones and Alison Weston who stepped down as Trustees, but who are all remaining as volunteers for the Trust.

We welcomed Kate Mitchell onto the board of Trustees at the AGM, as well as Elaine Johnson who has also recently joined as a Trustee. Elaine has been running and leading Kids Weekends at Back Dane for more than 25 years, while Kate runs some of our Partnership Holidays and arguably knows Back Dane better than anyone, having lived there as a child when it was still a working farmhouse in the 1960s!



We are also delighted to have received a grant of £6,300 from the National Lottery Community Fund to support inclusive volunteering. These funds will support our Improvement Weekends and Partnership Holidays to facilitate volunteering opportunities at Back Dane, and have already been put to good use on a recent Partnership Holiday (see further below).

John Foxcroft Memorial Event Saturday 7th August

On Saturday 7th August there will be an unveiling ceremony at Back Dane of plaques in memory of John Foxcroft, our founder, who sadly passed away last year and also in memory of Dave Robinson who was affectionately known as ‘Mr Back Dane’. If you are interested in attending, then please email tinandave48@gmail.com and we will send you details. We intend to set up a “Park and Ride” scheme for those attending.



Improvement Weekends

Small groups of volunteers have been able to get up to Back Dane in the last few months to undertake tasks such as mowing lawns and pressure washing the flagstones around the cottage. A thermography and air tightness test was carried out at Back Dane at the end of April to identify where we can improve heat loss and retention.

A ‘mini’ Improvement Weekend was held in May to continue to prepare Back Dane for the return of visitors, including carrying out vital safety and security checks. Volunteers also constructed a sheltered bench, installed the information board in the sensory garden, tidied the tool store and began some of the insulation and draught exclusion jobs identified by the thermography test.

Upcoming Improvement Weekend dates include 6th- 8th August and Bank Holiday weekend 27th- 30th August. There are two events planned for the BH weekend – an open day for all volunteers and supporters on Saturday 28th, and we are acting as a staging post for a local climate change awareness event planned for Sunday 29th. Please email backdane@gmail.com if you are interested in attending either weekend.

¹ This newsletter (and other news) is published at <http://backdane.co.uk/news.html>

Partnership Holidays

In May we were able to host a Partnership Holiday at Back Dane working with East Lindsey Area of Sanctuary and supported by the National Lottery Community Fund grant. A young family stayed at Back Dane and helped with some environmental work including planting trees and sowing wildflower seeds, with both young and old getting stuck in!

They also began 'learning the ropes' of using Back Dane, with the intention of volunteering for the Trust on a future weekend to support and assist other asylum seekers and refugee families staying at Back Dane for the first time.



Kids Weekends

Back Dane Trust Kids Weekends are planned at Back Dane for this Summer and Autumn, and we have already been speaking to Staffordshire Wildlife Trust about hosting 'Wild Play' outdoor activities at Back Dane during these holidays.

The Tuesday Club

The Tuesday Club is currently still closed because of the Covid situation, but arrangements are being made at the moment and it is hoped that it will be able to restart in July.

Other Groups Using Back Dane

We have managed to get two groups in staying at Back Dane over the last couple of months whilst keeping within the Government's Covid Guidelines, Just Drop In and Cre8, both from Macclesfield. The girls staying on the Cre8 weekend at Back Dane left us some lovely feedback...

The whole experience was alot of fun, I enjoyed not having any social media, the quiet, playing games, the swings and pretty much everything I am grateful for not having many responsibilities and for having a nice time away to enjoy myself and not having to worry.

Back Dane Environment

The Back Dane woodland and wildflower meadow are springing into life at the moment, with flowers blooming and migrant species returning, including pied flycatchers and redstarts. Over the last few months trees have been planted and wildflower seeds have been sown, and the sensory garden is looking very healthy thanks to the efforts of volunteers. Pied Flycatchers are nesting (see recent photo of flycatcher chicks below), including some that appear to have been rung at Back Dane during previous years. Barn Owl chicks have also been heard from the Barn Owl box at the edge of the woodland, with the adults being spotted quite regularly.





How to Support the Back Dane Trust

Volunteering – There are numerous opportunities for volunteering right across the different activities that the Back Dane Trust undertakes and we are always looking for new (and returning!) volunteers. If you would like to get involved or have any questions at all about volunteering at Back Dane or for the Trust then please email info@backdane.co.uk

Facebook – Please ‘like’ and ‘follow’ our Facebook page and keep a look out for new posts updating our followers with the work we are doing and what is going on at Back Dane – see facebook.com/backdanetrust or search for @backdanetrust



Website – visit www.backdane.co.uk

Amazon – You can support the Back Dane Trust each time you shop on Amazon at no extra cost whatsoever. Simply go to smile.amazon.co.uk, login and select ‘Beasley Back Dane’ as your selected charity, then remember to login into smile.amazon.co.uk each time you purchase from Amazon and you’ll earn 0.5% for the Back Dane Trust at no charge to you or us.



Hiring Back Dane

The charitable organisations that we book out to, do sometimes have issues that cause them to cancel at late notice and unfortunately many of our principal users are, by their nature, often unable to take advantage at short notice. So, we would be interested to know if any of our members would be interested in taking up short notice cancellations to stay at Back Dane, thus maintaining our revenues and enabling us to return the booking deposit of the cancelling organisation. If you would like to be put on a notification list, please email backdane@gmail.com with the subject “Cancellation List”.

